

VII

*(Black edition number 1)*



*a dead spot of light...*

# Introduction

This edition is different.  
This edition is black.  
This edition has a limited focus.  
This edition will not remain an exception.

Black Metal is a genre that has always been able to fascinate me in some respect. The first experience with it was on a show on MTV – yes, they did play black metal – called Headbangers Ball or to be more precise, the last twenty minutes; the segment 'Into the Pit'; something like that. There I had the chance to hear this extreme kind of art for the first time: Satyricon, Immortal, Emperor ... Hecate Enthroned (yes, the clip in which they run around in the woods and pretend to be überevil). It all began there ... (no ... there was no Internetz .. doh!)

This magazine has been and hopefully will always be some kind of experiment. Elements will appear, be changed ... colours will switch ... and also the design is anything but definite. The idea of releasing a 'black edition' is something I had in my mind for some time already, but I never had enough 'material' at hand to actually create such a thing. Well ... things have turned to the better and as you can see a lot of stuff was reviewed for this album. Nevertheless, this particular style will remain something I will spread merely on a smaller scale, because it is more difficult and more time consuming to get such an edition done.

Next aspect:

I am thinking about switching to a two-month cycle ... way to much work to get it done in one month ...

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Cheers

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## Interview Segment

### The Black Gate / Deathlike / Vidsyn / Endsum / Lethal Injection / Slavia

1. Hailz Aquilion. How are you and how are things in Norway?

Hailz, I am fine, a little busy with work and some pre production for the next Deathlike release, but all is fine.

2. For how many years are you a musician already and when it everything got started? Was there an album which made you choose this direction?

Ahh...let me think here, somewhere around 22 years, my first real band was a Death/Thrash band somewhere late 80`s. There was more than one album that got me started, after listening to metal for a few years I got into Thrash metal, then a little later Death, Doom and Black Metal. But when it comes to albums I have to say Slayer "Hell awaits", Celtic Frost "Emperors return" really got me going.

3. Which project did you start first and by looking back, how do you see this 'band' from today?

Well it was this band back in the late 80`s, I was very young and making/writing music was more for the fun of it in a way, the music itself was a little naïve but some songs where pretty god, a couple of years ago I found some recordings we did and it sounded surprisingly god, cool times.

4. Do you prefer old-school black/death metal or are you also fond of modern trends? Do you think it is possible to mimic the concepts and approaches of the early days of the extreme metal scenes; like the German band Warhammer attempts to?

I do think I prefer the old school style over the modern, The music doesn't get brutal or good for that matter just by playing fast and technical and with loud barking vocals, I think many bands kind of miss the point here. If you take Autopsy's "Severed survival" is sound more brutal than many new bands even thou there are no blast beats on that record, another example is Bathory's "Under the sign of the black mark" not any there either but still it sound colder and more atmospheric than most black metal records of today. This doesn't mean I don't like fast music, but what I mean is that it comes down capturing the right feeling more than playing fast or brutal. I do think one can get very close to the same concepts today ,the new Asphyx record is a very good example of this ,it combines newer production with some real old school Death Metal ,a great record indeed.

5. Let us start with the discussion of your bands:

#### THE BLACK GATE

6. How would you describe the progression of the band from your self-titled first demo over Antichristian Warcampaign Part I to your most recent one, called "The Serpent Who Slept Dead"?

The first T.B.G demo contained song that were recorded very fast, there were no deep meaning behind the first demo, this demo contains a strong Thrash influence, thou the title track kind of shows the epic side of The Black Gate.

The second was more in the old school Black Metal vein, with harsher production and simpler arrangements, the songs are more reparative and monotonic.

On the third demo, the songs where more thought thru and I worked on the arrangements a lot, so they are more or less just better, that's my opinion. The material is more epic, and there are more different things happening in the songs. I think that "The Black Gate" song from the first demo is very familiar to the song on this demo.

7. What kind of bands have influenced you for creating this project? Has this changed over the years or did you try to play a certain type of music and ignoring all trends around you?

Bathory!!! Is a major influence and inspiration for The Black Gate, if there hadn't been for Bathory there would have been no The Black Gate, but of course bands like Possessed, Hellhammer/Celtic Frost also had their part in influencing me. The Black Gate has its mold in old school bands and it will always stay that way, for all my projects I write and play what comes natural in a way, I have never paid any attention to trends, they come and go, I don't let them interfere with my work. I don't think this has changed much over the years.

8. Your latest demo "The Serpent Who Slept Dead" comes with some quite complex arranged music, which offers also hardly any longer passages with endless repetition of motives; a surprise to me. How long was this release in the making and did you take special precautions to prevent the issue of monotonous segments?

Well some of the very first riffs that made it to the demo was actually written so far back as 2000, then different arrangements and ideas popped up over the years, the first try on recording this demo started around 2003, these recording were just test's for trying out ideas, I went over the arrangements over and over again before I was satisfied, But the recordings started 2007, by then most of the music was written and arranged, but there were still changes made right to the end of the recordings. I made some test demos and listen to them a lot during the recordings to make sure that the whole thing didn't become boring or any off the other things you mention in your question.

9. Taken from your MySpace site:

"The title is "The Serpent Who Slept Dead", and it is a "concept demo" where all the songs follow the same story." Can you enlighten us on the background of the release?

All the song's lyrics on the demo are more or less take from the book "The Necronomicon" Some right out of the book and some re-written by me, I had to change some words and place a few passages a little different in order to fit the music, both music and lyrics was arranged and re-arranged a few times in order to work. I really find the book very interesting, I don't know if you or any of the readers know about this book, I guess some of you do, anyway my view is that if the book is a fake it's a real good story and if it is for real then it's downright terrifying, no matter what I find it very inspiring. Check it out.

10. You wrote to me in an e-mail that your early works are sold-out. Is there any chance to see/hear them in the future again?

More and more people asking for these releases so I guess I have to do something about it, there are some plans but it's too early to say anything at this moment .check out the MySpace page in the future for any news on this matter.



## DEATHLIKE

11. What were the reasons for starting this band? How would you describe the music of Deathlike?

Well back in 2006, I started a band with 2 other guys ,we did some rehearsals but after some big "personal differences" I decided to split and go on my own, some of the songs we rehearsed made it to the first Deathlike demo.

After this Deathlike was supposed to be a solo project but it grew into a little bit more than that. The first demo was written and recorded very fast, maybe a little too fast when looking back on it, but I still think it's pretty good and it was some great times...It was maybe a little more in the modern style than the second demo, what do you think? When it comes to the music of Deathlike it is Death Metal modern or old school, or like a friend said, Pure Fucking Death Metal...hell yeah!!!

12. Your latest release Enmity sounded very old-school and hardly any modern elements could be found on it. How come? Do you feel more comfortable with music in this particular style?

After almost being finished with the second demo I wanted to change the direction a little, use more heavy parts and basically a more old school approach or feeling to the whole thing, and it just felt more natural and right, it's more Deathlike in a way...

13. Unlike 'The Black Gate' this is not a one-man band, so, are the other member also involved in the song-writing or what is their part of the band?

Deathlike is not a very democratic band, I do write all the music and lyrics, also most arrangements are done by me, I have the final word, this band is for me kind of personal in a way, but when it come to Torment's solo's he had almost free hands so to speak, I just gave him some hints about what I wanted from a special part and he did his thing, sometime his ideas was very different from mine but it worked out great. He is now a permanent member and will have more input on the next release. We also have found a steady bass player so there will be less session musicians in the future, and I guess these guys will more input on music in the future.

14. Why did you revamped the first recordings for Enmity nearly entirely? I was surprised to read this on your MySpace page back then. Did some of the first versions made it on the final release?

I just wasn't satisfied with the result and as I said in an earlier question, I wanted to change the direction of the music; I think I become a little more certain of where I wanted to go with the band. No tracks made it to the final version, everything was re-recorded ,but the songs "Place of dead names", "Kryptia" was more or the less the same, and "No light left" and "Prime evil blackness" was re-arranged a little before re-recorded. Some lyrics were also changed or simply trashed.

15. You already working on your next release, or? What can we expect on it? What would the difference to the Enmity one be and where do you want to progress towards?

The work on the next release has begun, is was originally planned to be release as a demo sometime in August, but plans has been changed (yet once again...sorry about that) I now plan to pro print the whole thing, some people including you thought this was a good idea and I have to agree, release date is uncertain but some time during this year, again check out the MySpace page for news, When it comes to the music...well, I think it kind of follows the progression from the first to the second...It will be heavier and even more old school but still I will try to make the production better There will be four tracks plus an intro and outro, the song are a little bit longer this time...

#### SOME MORE GENERAL QUESTIONS TOWARDS THE END

16. A question on the lyrical background of your music. What are the topics on the releases and are there any authors that have influenced you over the years?

Well my lyrics more or less is about the three D's as I like to say, Darkness, Death and Doom, there so many different themes to write about within this, everything from old ancient religions and history, old folk tales, tales of end of the world and so on, the occult etc...you will never hear me growl about the greenhouse effect or any zombie thing or anything like that. When it comes to authors I find inspiration in the works of Anton Szandor LaVey, Aliester Crowley, H.P Lovecraft and Phil Hine, to name a few



17. You currently play in a one-man band as well as normal ones, so it is natural to ask if you prefer one of these over another one? Is it possible to have a benefit from having to write, compose and record everything alone?

There are advantages and disantvanages in both, when recording for a solo project its faster to get things done, all thou you have to do all the work by yourself you don't have to wait for someone else to come to do their part, sadly there are often many excuse for certain people not to be able to show up, work, girlfriends, broken cars on so on...this is not a factor when recording a solo project ,I can choose for myself the level of involvement of others, thou it is more expensive because you have no one to share the expencesies with. Then it is the other way around in way with a band, a little bit harder to plan things, but if the people are serious then it usually isn't a problem. I don't think I prefer one over the other they both has their negative and positive sides.

18. Actually, I am surprised that both of these bands above are not signed to a label. Even small underground bands, also those whose music sucks pretty much, got their music spread by one of these. So, why the reluctance on your side?

First of all you are right that I have been reluctaned ,I don't like the music industry very much, even parts of the underground are really fucked up ,that's my view anyway. It's all about trends and other worthless ways of getting attention, while the music comes in second place in a way, and it suffer from this. I do not want a part of this, I know it's difficult to get a record deal without being part of this circus but I try to. But I want to keep my and the bands integrity...And also I am a little bit lazy. I have received a few offers but they have not been to my liking, and I am not too picky actually, there are some record labels out there that I would really like a deal with so I guess I to work on these a little more...hehe

19. How do you record your music? At home in your basement or in a professional studio? Is also the mixing and production done by you?

I have my own little and primitive studio, nothing fancy but it works and I know it well and it gets the job done. Most of the tracking is done here, except the drums, and I also do the mixing and production myself. So if any of you don't like it you can blame me...

20. Please write some words on other bands you had been involved in:  
Vidsyn, Endsum, Lethal Injection, Slavia

Endsum was formed back in 98/99 I think, we did three demos the first was called "Darkness before dawn" this one got very good reviews. then came "Harvest of anger" and "As darkness falls" As Darkness fall" s was recorded in Henning Ramseth's ( Ramzet )Space Valley Studio, it had a good production compared to the others but lacked the atmosphere and feeling the two first had, I did guitar, bass and vocals on the first demo, vocals and guitar on the second and guitar on the third. All three demos where more or less the same musically, just different production, I wrote all the music and about 50% of the lyrics .If you have to compare Endsum with some other bands I have to say that we sounded like a cross between Darkthrone and Immortal with a good portion of old school Thrash, We did shows with other Norwegian bands like Koldbrann, Vesén, Madder Mortem, to name a few. Good times. And we where also where featured on a couple of sampler cd's. I don't remember the details on these releases right now, The bands split in 2006 I think due to "personal differences".

Both me and the drummer of Endsum join Vidsyn in 2004 I think, I was fired in 2006 because of personally differences you may say. I did guitar on the "Men of eight 10 # vinyl. Vidsyn is more modern and more melodic than Endsum was, like a lighter version of Immortal some people has said, Nattsjel did all the music and lyrics so it's hard for me to say but I guess it's a fair statement. Did again shows with Koldbrann, Vesén and other bands like Dead Trooper, Gorgoth (before the drama took place) ,Pantheon I, Nebula Mystic, we also played at the "United Metal Maniacs" in Germany in 2005, It rained like hell when we played but it was a great trip, cool people, good music and not least good beer. Thumbs up for Germany. They haven't been very active since and I don't talk too much with any of them so I haven't got a clue on how their progression is going.

Lethal Injection was started by me and the drummer and vocalist of Endsum/ Vidsyn, we did some rehearsals I don't remember how many, but then the hold thing folded, as I mentioned I had some issues with one of the guys so we split. But the songs we rehearsed come alive on the first "Deathlike" demo. Stylewise you could say it was/is Death Metal in a little more modern direction than the latest Deathlike demo.

I was asked to do a gig with Slavia in Oslo when they supported Disiplin some years back, and what a night it was...I did a couple of rehearsals and the gig, there was some talk about an album to but the singer of Slavia joined Disiplin and things where put on ice so to speak, and then nothing, the album was released some years later without my or any other of us participating, if I am not mistaking...Slavia sounds like...well Slavia, I don't know how to describe it, somekind of simple aggressive punkish Black Metal, check it out yourself, they are up and going.

21. How has the reception and feedback of the bands been?

Mostly good actually, even the shows wasn't always that good, something to do with too much beer and not enough practice, but very fun times indeed.

22. How do you see the Norwegian black metal scene today? A lot of good release came from there, but this has shifted and the focus has been set on bands that used their chances (Satyricon, Dimmu Borgir, Emperor) or desperately try to get attention (Nattefrost). From your perspective, have there been good releases from your native country recently and which were these? I think it's like you say in your question here, there was many good Black Metal releases some years ago, sadly very few today, the reasons for this are many I think, some just focused on getting better as musicians and then kind of lost the music on the way, others decided to join the big Black Metal circus loosing perspective on what they are doing ,and then there some who just took another direction with their music. I guess there are more reasons to...

It's always good to hear a new Darkthrone album but I prefer their older works, I do think that Enslaved are a great band but I just don't get it, and believe I have tried, maybe one day I am still trying., I do look forward to the new Immortal album thou...



There are quite a few of these "super group/projects" with well known musicians joining forces, most of these I find boring and uninteresting, but the record labels seems the like them.

I personally think at this moment the Norwegian Black Metal scene is just plain old boring, but that doesn't mean that the old albums aren't any good, or that it may rise again. And don't give up on the Norwegian Metal scene, there are many good bands out there playing other kinds of Metal.

23. Five recordings that are important to you:

Oh...that is a difficult question, if you has said 50 it would be easier, but I give it a try, in no order thou...

Bathory "Under the sign of the black mark"

Slaughter "Strappado"

Kreator "Plesure to kill"

Slayer "Reign in blood"

Celtic frost "Into the pandemonium"

I will probably change my opinion tomorrow but these are some great albums...

24. How can people reach you?

The easiest way is to mail me at [death-like@hotmail.com](mailto:death-like@hotmail.com) or [theblackgate@live.no](mailto:theblackgate@live.no)

I may be a little slow answering but keep nagging and I will answer.

25. Some final words, please

Well, I guess I said enough so I'll keep it short, but thanks to you Thorsten, and thanks to the fans/people that I have been in contact with regarding both Deathlike and The Black Gate

THANX FOR THE SUPPORT!!!

And remember to use your heads and don't let any record label or any corporation tell you what to like or not...

Hailz & Cheerz

Aquilion





## Review segment

WinterRealm – Ouroboros

(USA; Black Metal)

4 Tracks (Tape – Autumn Gate Productions) -\_- - (35:31)

<http://www.myspace.com/winterrealm>;

<http://www.winterrealm.tk/>

Ouroboros, the alchemic symbol for infinity or wholeness, is the title of this release and the track titles give an indication why this way an applicable choice. Those four compositions are supposed to reflect the turn of the seasons and form together an entire year. From a reviewer's point of view it would be of interest not only how the music was executed and crafted, but also how well it is able to actually reflect the conceptual background. Is it possible to identify the autumn or the spring for instance? Let us do an analysis, then:



- Spring (Consecration)  
Birds are chirping, some keyboards tune in and the music progresses into some form of atmospheric melodic black metal. Imagine Summoning without the harsh vocals and with less impact of the synths; these wake also memories on Oxiplegatz' Sidereal Journey. Clean ones appear as well and the whole track is a bit 'kept back' or quite calm.
- Summer (Conjuration)  
The sound of rain opens this track, the sound of thunder and the music progresses quite gently. In the background there is the vague play of a keyboard and a mixture between slower and faster segments can be found. There is a resemblance with the preceding track; in atmosphere as in style.
- Autumn (Manifestation)  
Crackling of fire, the sound of an owl ... this is what you can do at a dark autumn evening. Unlike 'Spring' and 'Summer', this one would be more aggressive and faster. The atmospheric/melodic elements are kept, but had been wrapped in a different envelope if you like. Here, also female vocals can be found for the first time.
- Winter (Banishing)  
Compared with the other tracks, this one falls through the cracks. It is slow and somehow melancholic. Rather doom mixed with black metal than anything with an emphasis on the latter can be found here. Those females vocals appear again. Furthermore, the impact of the keyboards is on the largest scale on this one.

One aspect in which every track differs from the preceding/succeeding one would be the drums. Their sound ranges from slightly muffled over to raw and cold and you might get an impression that each of the compositions had been recorded with a slightly unique setting. Aside from this the introduction of each track also reflects the style of the season in some respect. Cheering music at the beginning – spring and summer – intense one in the autumn (a state of ecstasy from fermented harvested fruits?) and a depressing and sad ending – winter, obviously. The music appears in a certain scale and never really attempts to break out of it. Tempo and flow are restricted in some respect and rarely exceed a certain barrier; with exceptions according to the 'seasons' of course. Harsh breaks or aggressive switches are ideas that have hardly a place on this album. Aside from this the typical ingredients make an appearance: growls/screams in terms of the male vocals with some rare clean ones; a female who joins in for some short glimpses on the last two tracks; gentle keyboard play in the background with a more dominant role on the last composition.

When there is something I have to shalowness of the music. To me, crafted leaves a little bit to be arrangements ... there are not Yes, the riffs and the atmosphere average, but I am still slightly bored. music is generally presented in, well, it is hard to give a definite are not even too complex or too sort of a red line; not only in terms them. Maybe the ideas in each of



criticize then it is the overall the actual way the music was desired. Take the vocals, take the many surprising elements in them. are good and undoubtedly above Maybe it is the length in which the maybe it is a concept gone wrong, statement on this. Those four tracks overloaded; rather the absence of of each of them but also between the compositions should have been

explored a little bit more and given more depth with more facets for instance. This album is no rollercoaster trip, but rather something like a shift in perspective that comes all too sudden and without a real explanation. So, when you take a look on the album the following question arises: How does this all fit together? It is really difficult to answer, but let us at least attempt to do so:

When you read the lyrics on the sheet, with which the demo is sold, then you get an impression of some sort of transition; yes, part of it can already be read from the track titles, thank you for paying attention. How the idea behind the music is to be understood is revealed by the texts, but are they actually able to reflect some of the atmospheres? To describe the performance on Ouroboros as convincing would be misleading. The emotions, to which the texts allude, are merely scratched on the surface and as the music is slightly plain and 'controlled', it is hard to really feel the intentions behind this piece of art. Not only the weird transitions – clear cuts and gaps – between each of the compositions are somewhat annoying, it is also this limitation in the facets, which might give a person a hard time, while listening to Ouroboros.

As already mentioned above, the idea behind this album is a concept, which the listener is able to take a dive into with the help of the lyric sheet. A core aspect is already explained by the title of the album: Ouroboros. More information on the matter can be gained from the titles of the tracks. References to magic(k)al topics can also be obtained from the picture of this piece of paper: it reminds on those illustrations from the Middle Ages, which depict witches as women who ride on their broomsticks over the top of the houses; while the goat is the obvious reference to the devil and the bats indicate that this scenery takes place at night. The word 'witch' can be translated to wise woman – something the



patriarchal Christian church had and still has some problems with – yet the texts actually deal with a different matter. Something about a ritual and how it progresses through the different seasons. In spring the path is set and the trip begins: out of this world into something outside out this physical one. In the summer Ancient Gods are summoned, for they are described as sources of ancient knowledge and forgotten wisdom that the person wants to obtain again. Autumn is the time in which the connection to the mystical world is established and 'she' appears on the mystical scenery. It should not surprise to see the winter as the time in which the journey ends and the person returns to this world again. The texts contain a lot of references to pagan mysticism and the idea of renewal. Those

who are more familiar with such topics, might be able to point to specific rituals or concepts that from a neutral perspective remain vague and unclear.

Back to the music again: A recommendation I have given so many times already is also valid when it comes to Winter Realm: give the listener some time to breathe. Give this person some rest and do not attempt to express too many lyrics in a short time frame. It simply does not work. I can name countless releases with the same flaw and I am always surprised to see it appear again and again.

I believe a lot of effort was put into this release and I am really impressed by the way the tapes are distributed by the band. But believe me, while the outer shell might be tempting, what you find in the inside is less fascinating. Similar to the debut album of Hexentomb, this American band spread something that pretends to be more than it actually is. And it is always a sad thing to thing to see, left alone to give such a statement. Good riffs and atmospheres as well as a good production make not a powerful release alone. The issues discussed above could have been avoided with some additional balancing or a splitting of the long compositions into smaller ones, whose content would have been varied to a larger degree then.

Note:

Cassette limited to 222 copies. 100 on white cassette, 100 on black, and 22 on clear purple.

## Conte Slavimor

(Italy; Black Metal)

<http://www.myspace.com/conteslayvimor>

Conte Slavimor is a one-man black metal band from Italy and three of their release have seen the light of day since. In the following segment each of them will be discussed separately. As the first is a split album, it is necessary to cover all of the bands and spread some light on each of their music. Nothing else makes sense.

### Svirnath / Conte Slayvimor / Nebeldunkel split album (2008)

14 Tracks (CDr – self-released) -\_-\_- (48:11)

All three bands have several aspects in common:

- this split album would be their first release,
- they all would be from Italy
- and all play black metal – in one way or another.

### Svirnath

(Italy; Black Metal, Acoustic, Folk)

6 Tracks -\_-\_- (17:08)

A bit undecided is how the band presents itself on this split album. On the one hand you have pretty raw black metal, while the other comes more as a mere folk or acoustic one. This alone would not be a bad thing, because other bands had some success with this type of mixture before; just think about Empyrium for instance. The problem I have with Svirnath on this release is the following: the lack of consistency. The music switches from A to B without a neat transition or flow. So, there is black metal on the one hand and folk on the other, but there is no real coherence between them. You can listen to each part separately and it would not matter much.

The performance as such is not bad. Even though the rawness of the black metal is a bit disturbing at times, the song-writing and the arrangements are not overtly bad. Do not expect to find some outstanding art on their share of this split, but the black metal tracks are solid and create some interest on the side of the listener. In terms of the style the music switches between slow and melancholic parts to fast and somewhat aggressive ones. One guitar dominates the art, while a bass plays some vaguely distinguishable melodies in the background and the all too common drum-computer comes with the all too common flaws.

Metal: 2, 4

½ metal/folk: 1

Non-metal: 3, 5, 6

### Conte Slayvimor

(Italy; Black Metal)

4 Tracks -\_-\_- (15:08)

The raw – or shall I write ‘not optimally produced’? – black metal continues; better than the previous performance of Svirnath but still wanting. Well, for all participating bands this split release would be their ‘debut’ if you like, so it is only natural to find some flaws in them. In terms of Conte Slayvimor the shallowness in the music needs to be emphasized. The lack of a powerful bass and the raw production create together this weird mixture a lot of young bands need to deal with. Aside from this, the song-writing leaves also a bit to be desired. There are simply too long passages with too much of tremolo-picking as well as monotonous arrangements. And as also the vocals give me a hard time – express the texts with more verve, will you? –, my overall impression is not a positive one.



Nevertheless, some positive aspects can be found here, too. Signori Della Guerra for instance is not bad and comes with a good amount of consistency. Not surprising when you keep in mind that it would be the shortest track of them all. Anyway, Conte Slayvimor play music with an emphasis on the atmosphere and the music lacks therefore a bit aggressiveness. With the idea to repeat the motives to a good deal and to keep the complexity in certain boundaries, this Italian band attempted to create this type of black metal on their first output.

### Nebeldunkel

(Italy; Black Metal)

3 Tracks - \_ \_ - (10:23)

Again an ambient/folk intro leads up to the part of Nebeldunkel. Soon after, with the second track to be more precise, the black metal part takes over and the band leaves no doubt about where they will go with it. One aspect is revealed the very moment the music lashes of: here an entire band is about to unleash their fury upon the listener. The outcome is obvious and can heard and felt from second one. The drums create a good amount of pace and the dynamics are really able to support the other instruments. Similar to the two preceding bands the rest of the roles were assigned: dominant vocals, slightly dominant guitars and a bass in the background. Actually, this is what you can find all too often in the black metal scene.



Well, the music is slightly muffled at times, but the overall performance is quite solid. The music is catchy, has a good amount of dynamics and it interesting to listen to. Those three compositions have a rehearsal room touch, but this aspect it able to add a nice charm to the overall approach. Raw, often fast but with some nice interludes and breaks. Nebeldunkel are the best band on this CD and with a better production might be able to reach for higher levels.

#### Note 1:

From the perspective of a German the name of the band makes little sense at all. You simply do not add these words together ... at least not in the way it was done here. Dunkler Nebel would have been correct and it translates to 'Dark or Gloomy Fog'.

#### Note 2:

Originally there were supposed to be fifteen tracks on this release and four in total for Nebeldunkel, but one did not make it on the final version. So, this would be the explanation why there are only fourteen of them.

Svirnath / Conte Slayvimor / Silenzio track

1 Track - \_ \_ - (5:30)

Conte Slayvimor - Nel Cuore Dell' Inferno

The last track would be a collaboration of two of the bands on this split with a band/person named Silenzio. As the booklet gives no indication about the instruments and involvement of each of the band members, it is hard to put this one track in relation to the other art on this release. Darkthrone meets folk ... this would sum it up in some respect. First the furious black metal, then the calm and gentle ending. Why not? One of the good tracks of this split album can be found at the end ... seems like the collaboration was able to create something worth listening to.

#### Final note:

Well ... as expected ... this release gives some hints on how young bands sound. The flaws in the sound, production and also the song-writing leave a little bit to be desired. In case someone is familiar with the stuff from the underground, then such stuff can be expected and taken into account as a nice or charming facet.



Conte Slayvimor – Nel Cuore Dell' Inferno (2009)  
(Italy; Black Metal)  
8 Tracks (CDr – Self-released) -\_- (34:25)

Nel Cuore Dell' Inferno would be the first *real* demo release of the Italian band Conte Slayvimor. And it is a quite peculiar one. Take a look at the track lengths: they range from around two to something close to twelve minutes. Furthermore, there is some sort of a middle part of the album, when you look at how the lengths have been distributed. Aside from this also a step into more professionalism can be identified and of the raw as well as thin sound of the first output – the three-way-split album – not much is left here. Alright, it is still raw but of a kind that is tolerable and listenable.

Nel Cuore Dell' Inferno is a weird album with

contrasting elements. Either short or long tracks with two 'middle ones' make up the performance here. Such an indecision is something not many bands will dare or consider this as a valid option; another rare example would be Helcaraxë's Triumph and Revenge. Also, from the perspective of a reviewer it is difficult to write on it. Did the band do this on purpose? Is this demo some sort of experiment, with tracks of various sorts and lengths in order to figure out which kind of compositional attempt works out best? Then, only the succeeding outputs will give hints on this daring test. A lot of guesswork.

Conte Slavimor's music has a good amount of catchiness and also facets of a neat atmosphere; take Necrothrone for instance. The music has a certain amount of drive, which makes it interesting to follow as well as to enjoy it. Even though the band seems to be reluctant to give a definite statement about the style they want to play, those moments in which the art progresses towards the faster regions are quite enjoyable. The music is neither too aggressive, nor is it too depressive. Facets from both branches can be found, but have been combined and appear in various degrees over the entire release. Well, as discussed before, the aspect of length of some compositions make it a bit of a challenge to thoroughly enjoy the art on Nel Cuore Dell' Inferno, but another adverse effect comes from the production. Generally, it is often too messy and unbalanced, with the obvious outcome that not all of the facets of the music are clearly distinguishable from each other. A raw and noisy sound dominated this demo ...

To categorize this output is a bit difficult. Aside from obvious influences like Darkthrone (old), Burzum and Immortal (old) it is not easy to give a definite statement. Parts remind me on what I have found in the pagan branch, but executed here on a more 'noisy'/raw level. Depressive moments make an appearance as well ... so, to sum it up shortly: experimentation on a higher degree.

From my perspective it is a weakness. I have some problems in really appreciating the vocals and their sound. On Conte Slayvimor's share of the split album it was their part that gave me a hard time and also here a voice with more power as well as identify would really help the band to get their stuff right. It is one of the short-comings a one-man-band to has to deal with. In case the line-up has remain the way it is, the chances to vary the aspects of the music in a meaningful way are generally not high.

Conte Slayvimor is by no means bad. The song-writing is pretty nice at times and comes with good ideas. It is just this one – again, from my own perspective – flaw that gives me really hard time. Those who are less nit-picky and more tolerant might find some interesting black metal on this demo release. Yes, there are still too many monotonous aspects and the approach of the band has not become clear again, but compared with the first output of this Italian band, Nel Cuore Dell' Inferno is a step in the right direction. Not only is the art more focussed, also the better crafted production needs to be emphasized. So, fans of underground black metal should give this release a try.





Conte Slayvimor - Dualità Tra Distruzione E Desiderio (2010)  
(Italy; Black Metal)  
4 Tracks (CDr – Self-released) -\_-\_- (19:10)

Release number three: Dualità Tra Distruzione E Desiderio. And again it is different. Do not look too surprised, will you? Bands evolve over time and you can see/hear it in respect to this band as well. While some bands try to stay true to their early sound no matter how ridiculous it may be, some think it might be best to venture a bit into a more professional direction. Conte Slayvimor's art still shows hints on the first two outputs, but with this one it might be fair to say that those experimental days – see review above – are over and some sort of direction or style has been found.

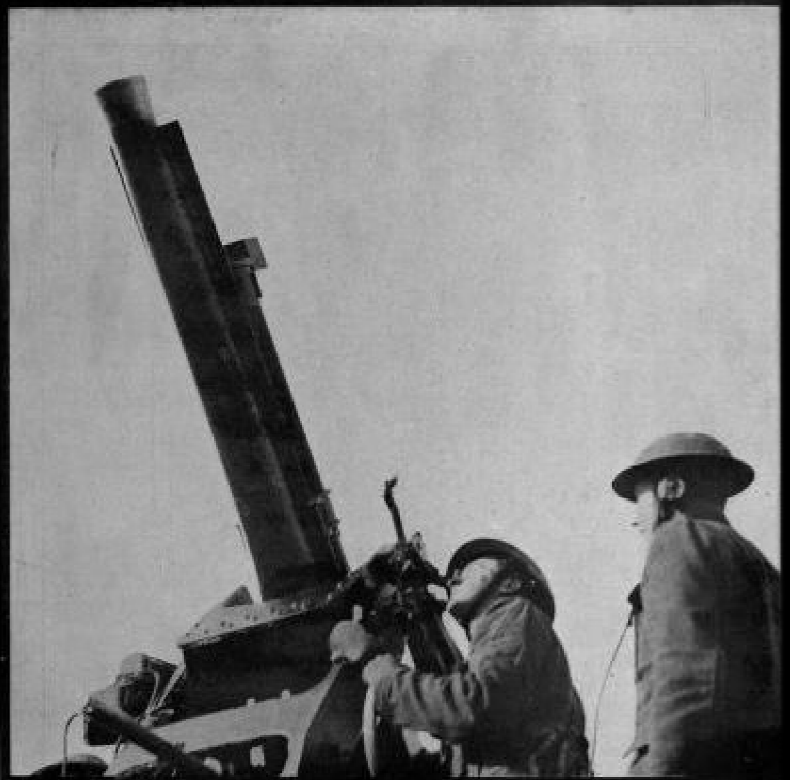
Dualità Tra Distruzione E Desiderio is more focussed. The music is more straightforward, comes with neat arrangements and riffs. It is black metal you can easily appreciate and listen to, even though the level of novelty is not too high. Moreover, the production could have been better and the drum-computer sounds odd at times. But unlike on the earlier stuff I did not feel that it is necessary to overtly complain about it because the three tracks – plus a cover version; see below – are as such as to compensate for these flaws to a good deal.

The dense guitar textures, in those moments in which the drum-computer does not try to kill them, have a neat melodic touch and also something of the bass can be heard; reminds a bit on Strid and similar bands. Aside from this aspect, the compositions appear in the upper midtempo section, come with a surprising amount of atmosphere and try to avoid the underground cliché of sticking to a failed strategy. Some examples: Profezia D'Apocalisse has a nice beat and ideas; Ritual comes with an interesting riffs by the guitars; Angelo Della Vendetta is perhaps the most atmospheric one. The song-writing is good and comes without a too large amount of monotony.

Immortal cover:

Somehow close to the original, but thanks to the weird sound of the cymbals – or better said drum-computer – the experience is a bit of an ambiguous one. If you look beyond this one aspect, then you witness a pretty close interpretation. The sound is rawer and has less power, but the cover is actually not bad...

Anyway, from the three releases which have seen the light of day since Dualità Tra Distruzione E Desiderio is by far the best. The song-writing has more focus, the production is adequate and also the vocals fit in some respect into the whole framework. Really ... after several spins it is possible to really enjoy this piece of art; if you look behind the flaws and shortcomings.



Three reviews in a nutshell:

Starting with the earliest and by progressing to the latest one, the listener will be able to discover a clear as well as constant progression in terms of the quality as well as professionalism. From an overtly raw and thin sound, the band moved on towards more listenable levels of the black metal art. Of course, the music is far from perfect, but the direction is the right one and in case you have taken the same trip as the reviewer has done with these three releases, then you will most certainly appreciate the increase in so many aspects of the music.

Black Faith – Jubilate Diabolo (2010 Promo Version)

(Italy; Black Metal)

6 Tracks (MP3 – Self-released) -\_-\_- (32:21)

<http://www.myspace.com/blackfaithband>

Another Italian band, yes it is true. Amongst all the bands I contacted over the last weeks or months, the most positive responses were those I received from this South-European scene. Well, I have no problems in shedding some more light on bands from this country ... and there are some quite interesting ones, which you might have been aware of already, if you have followed this magazine since edition number one – otherwise you know what to do, right?

Unlike Rotorvator or Demetrius Grave, whose music appeared in earlier issues of this magazine, Black Faith deliver and do not attempt to hide their message and style in any respect, because everything they promise can be found in the title of this demo. The name Jubilate Diabolo gives a clear indication on where the road might go on this release: old-school black metal, whose sound might be described as a mixture between Darkthrone, Dark Funeral and Carpathian Forest. No mercy, not too many progressive elements and of course no modern sound. So, is this band merely a copycat, a bunch of musicians whose sole attempt is to beat the rotten horse even more? No. Alright ... if you look for the latest outré attempt to rape black metal with some weird sound elements or arrangements, then Black Faith's attempt is anything you will get gulped down your throat; the reverse direction would be closer to the truth.

Black Faith's music good, if you have a fancy for the type of music laid out earlier. The genre has not been invented here anew and to help it progress in any meaningful way might also not have been something this band had in mind, while recording this black piece of art. The music has a lot of drive, rarely monotonous has a good amount of depth – two guitars plus a bass – and also the vocals has some moments in which he shuts up. Nice written riffs and leads can be found and Black Faith played the old-school card, but did not overdo it. Even though there is a good touch of trueness in their art, you can hear the attempt to give it a different touch. What had been done right is the balancing. In the background the bass can be discerned clearly, the drums have their place and also the guitars do not try to dominate the scenery. So, aside from the criticism that basically nothing new was done here – mainstream view –, the aspect that everything sounds a bit too nice can be brought forth. A bit more nastiness and surprising facets would have had a positive influence on the overall performance.

Well, the target audience for Jubilate Diabolo should be obvious by now or?

Note:

This promo edition contains five tracks by the band and one additional Darkthrone cover. The full version will come without the cover but with two additional tracks; see the band's MySpace site and the respective blog entry.



Jute Gyte – Old Ways (2008)

(USA; Black Metal, Noise, Experimental)

7 Tracks (CDr – Jeshimoth Entertainment) -\_-\_- (62:36)

<http://www.myspace.com/jutegyte>

A title generally provides some hints on the actual content and when you take a look at Jute Gyte's Old Ways release and take into consideration that this would be one of their black metal ones, then 'the' idea behind it becomes somehow obvious. Yet are the expectations met? Are those old ways really walked upon? Let us see ...

Those three terms used for the description of the art are important to give at least a small indication on the performance of the band. With some obvious hints on the black metal side of Gnaw Their Tongues, Jute Gyte explores an extreme form of music, which is not too common. Distorted guitars, harsh screams and monotonous rhythms make up the basic oeuvre and they appear in varying degree and style over the course of the album. So, while the basic concept of the Dutch band was copied in some respect, there is nevertheless some form of limitation when it comes to the facets of the art. Old Ways appears in a more controlled and focused manner and therefore also



in a less variety of genres or influences. There are no samples, there are no aggressive switches in tempo ... the music is noisy and extreme but kept in a certain narrow corridor. Facets appear in a variety of ways, but the focus is kept on the metal side and what can be achieved by using a guitar. Weird samples and atmospheres are rather the exception and as the drums were made with a machine, a surprising level of limitation can be found here. Again, compared with the other earlier mentioned band, the listener experiences a flow of distorted sound, whose arrangements are rather calm and hardly 'offensive'. Where is the emotion, where is the tendency to grab the listener and take this person on a trip this person has never been on before?

Track 4 – Interlude – falls it bit out of the flow and comes with an interesting type of sound: the one of a Theremin, but here created with a guitar and not with the original instrument. Nevertheless, this weird oscillating noises are a stark contrast to the general style of the band and it would be nice to see this particular style appear on an even larger scale.

Track 6 – Snail – would be another 'non-metal' track, one that would not follow the dominant style on this album. Again, no transitions, again a rather disruptive character and again a sound a listener might hardly expect. Here, dissonance and a lack of harmony play an important role and they give you the idea of patiently watching a snail crawling on its way. You might get mad, due to the slow movements of this animal, you might loose some of your sanity. Once 'Snail' is over, some sort of depressive black metal inspired noise stuff turns in again ... the same concept as before, but now presented in a somehow melancholic or sad style.

What are you left with at the end? Jute Gyte's art is an ambiguous and by no means a convincing performance. What is the band's style? What is it they wanted to express? Confusion ... confusion at a large scale is what remains. Not only the shallowness and tiring kind of the music strains the patience of the listener or the lack of a clear direction, it is foremost the messed up way in which the tracks had been arranged. While the opening comes with a clear progression as well as escalation of intensity – Waves → Teeth –, those weird switches to and fro with which the listener is confronted later, leaves this person astounded about what is actually going on there. To have one break is already a difficult task to deal with, but to have two of these makes it nearly impossible to create some amount of density and consistency in the music. Old Ways is a fitting title. It gives the impression of something done to death, bereft of life, eaten once before and tiring at most. Jute Gyte is a one-man-band and you can hear it on this release. All the fallacies, all the short-comings lie open here.

Recommended tracks:  
Interlude (second part), Teeth

Jute Gyte – Young Eagle (2010)  
(USA; Black Metal, Noise, Experimental)  
7 Tracks (CDr – Jeshimoth Entertainment) -\_-\_- (61:33)

The latest release of the American band would be this and it would also be output number two in the year 2010. Again, seven tracks appear on it and the overall length shows a striking resemblance, too. It should not surprise further, when also the music itself follows a similar direction as in the output discussed above: but let us start with the general description again.

Well, the music is noisy, has black metal screams, comes at times with a voluminous sound and a drum-computer (later also normal drums seem to appear; Glory at Hand), whose programming shows the obvious and all too common flaws. Young Eagle opens with a thunderstorm and music in style of Gräfenstein or Setherial. No neat opening, no small





introduction ... a barrage of riffs is unleashed upon the listener and the tempo heads for that of an ICE. Even though this tendency is not kept as a main concept on this album, Jute Gyte like to return to it again and again. So, while one facet is rather fast and aggressive, the other one is much calmer and comes with a more in variety.

Melodic might be a proper description for these and the tempo as well as the style is then reduced to a minimum. It is a counter-point to what was discussed above. Acoustic and ambient interludes or breaks – whatever you might want to call it – provide the listener with a different set of emotions. The band does even take it so far as to compose music that is so calm and inoffensive – What a Bird Bore Away Over the Deep Ocean – that one might describe it as something on the other side of the spectrum; when you use the black metal parts as the other extreme.

When you take a look at the lyrics, then something odd or interesting – depends on certain preferences on the side of the listener – might unravel themselves. Unlike a lot of other black metal bands, here the idea behind the texts is something different; this would be true for both releases. No satanic clichés appear here and also no call to arms in order to fight Christianity. Mysticism of a peculiar kind is the red line which binds those two releases somehow together; even though the actual content is not connected. Philosophical in style and with references to Hegel for instance, this American band wants to step out of the shadow of the ordinary approach, which has been done to death. Memories on Satyricon and the metaphorical language in the texts are evoked and Jute Gyte wants you to listen and to read, wants you take some time and to figure out the meaning behind it all. Some examples will make this clear:

1: A world of automatic doors and concrete dinosaurs. Cherubs born of depleted uranium.  
(taken from Glory At Hand; Young Eagle)

2: In winter we make the spring. In summer, the harvesting.  
(taken from What a Bird Bore Away Over the Deep Ocean; Young Eagle)

3: The beasts arrive in waves. All are slain, infolaser rounds exiting their bodies from obscenely large wounds before extinguishing.  
(taken from Waves; Old Ways)

So, we have sort of dystopian, post-apocalyptic impressions (1), Blake-inspired mysticism (2) and somehow science-fiction like stories (3). Of course the music reflects this in some respect: 2 would be a calm and ambient/acoustic piece to name one example.

Again, the band seems not to be entirely sure on which path to walk upon. Would it be appropriate to follow the acoustic and atmospheric one or is the metal and noisy one. Similar to the other album discussed above, Jute Gyte has some difficulties in getting their stuff done right. Maybe it has to do something with the point of view from which someone actually approaches this kind of art, but the lack of consistency, these absurd switches and breaks in the style are not only disturbing but they fail to create a lasting impression; aside from the one named boredom. Those elements do not fit into the rest of the art and could easily be used for other purposes and it would not make a penny of a difference. When you take a look on the discography of the band, then you will notice what kind of facets the oeuvre consists of. There is the electronic side and there is the metal side... but when you merge them together, like to was attempted on these two releases, then they appear rather separate from each other and not coherent. Well, it is easier this way, but the outcome is all too obvious: partial shallowness, no synergy effects and confusing arrangements.

On the positive side can be noted that the band worked on their art and got rid of these endless monotonous passages and replaced them with something more friendly to the ear. Switches in tempo, breaks and interludes make an appearance in one way or another. And even though the performance is still not convincing and fails to impress thoroughly, it is at least preferable over the one on Old Ways. This is neither good nor bad. It is something strange or odd, and while it is possible to listen to it, to reach the level of being 'entirely enjoyable' would be too far-fetched. Some nice moments can be found on this recording, but the negative ones have an impact as well.



To sum both releases up a bit:

While the black metal part is basically a narrowed down interpretation of what Gnaw Their Tongues has offered on some of their albums, the calmer parts are of a kind the Dutch band would rarely like to lay hands on. From a more neutral perspective it should be noted that the way the elements on the recordings fit together is something not entirely convincing. The lack of consistency and the odd way in which those breaks or interludes appear give the listener a hard time.

Note:

Both releases come in a DVD case and have a lyric sheets in the box.

## **Strah** (Norway; Black Metal)

When you take a look at the Norwegian black metal scene these days, then youngsters might wonder about the special status it still has amongst fans of this extreme type of music. Established artists have begun to move out of the 'ordinary' boundaries of this type of art and they release music of a type that astounds in some respect. While Dimmu Borgir and Satyricon might be the most prominent examples for this type of 'evolution' – or maturity – side projects like Bourbon Flame or Hardingrock are another one. Nevertheless, the black metal scene is still quite active around there and spits out some nice bands now and then, whose attempt it seems to be to reawake the spirit of the old days again.

**Fullmånens Ve & Gru (2009)**  
**8 Tracks (CD – Self-released) - \_ \_ - (39:15)**

Did you ever thought that Burzum's ambient music is made of cheap keyboard sounds? Well, listen to Strah's first composition and you might reconsider your opinion, because the first thirty seconds of Brannød come with some really really peculiar tunes. They remind on those games from the C64 or Amiga era – good times ... better times – and are so extremely out of context from the rest of the demo that it is baffling to actually hear them. Whatever reasons those two musicians had to actually use such an uncommon effect remains unknown, but not only was it the choice a good one, the actual execution was done in a way that makes a lot of sense, because it is in the flow and it feels right when listening to this track. So ... and what about the rest?

Beyond the aforementioned minor aspect it is up to the vocals to create some sort of focal point and this has to do with the way they have been distorted. They remind on the performance of Satyr on some of his recent releases. The very clinical and sterile sound with which they can be found on these and how this affects the compositions in some respect; such was used for this release as well. Further, also the tendency to rather speak then actually 'sing' supports this argument; some vileness is created through this and the listener is able to feel such. In terms of the music the term solid might describe the performance quite adequately; especially for a young band. No monotonous blasts, endless riff repetition or pointless depressive black metal crap were used for this demo. This is cold and riff-oriented black metal with some nice drive now and then. No compromise in one way or another.

Nevertheless ... a track like Alene Mot Alle, with its really cool beats and introduction, is something the band should attempt to craft on a larger scale. It is the shortest track but also the one with the largest drive and even though the solo part in the interlude does not entirely fit into the composition – a break in the tempo – its sound and style still manage to support the atmosphere in some respect. Trollets Lyster would have some of these facets as well, but is unable to create a similar impression. It seems like the shorter tracks are those the bands feels most comfortable with: Dødens Hytte, another positive example.

Well, the production of the demo is not bad for a first step and everything flows neatly together; there is even a bass in the background. So, in this respect there is really little to criticize. The flaw of the album is the general absence of identity. A lot of ideas sound like having been used before by other bands and Strah progressed on some of



these approaches on their first output, used them for themselves and presented them in a different style if you like. Some tracks reminds on the particular style Satyricon has performed since their Rebel Extravaganza album, while other reminds on some of the later outputs of Darkthrone. Be it the atmosphere, the vocals, some arrangements, Strah are not able to shake this impression of. So, even though the compositions are quite catchy and well written, they offer nothing particularly new and are a bit too close to the aforementioned bands at times.

The band is able to write some interesting music and they are able to prove this on this demo. Yet, this positive aspect is overshadowed by the fact that their music leads the listener into different direction and dismembers this person in some respect. Shall it be the Darkthrone (the new stuff) path or the Satyricon (Rebel Extravaganza and other recent ones) or even towards the currently still minuscule folk facets? Well, judging from this release alone it is difficult to give a definite prediction where the road will lead the band towards. The approach is a bit drenched in the odour of having been played before. Fullmånens Ve & Gru lacks a bit of identity; not only in terms of progression but also in terms of how to differentiate from other artists. Strah did by no means a bad job on this demo and some of the tracks are really cool. It is just a bit too plain to fascinate in the long run.

The CD is printed and also the booklet has a professional look. Lyrics cannot be found, but it looks like some short comments were added to the tracks; they are in Norwegian.

Based on the review that was written for the Metal Archives:

<http://metal-archives.com/review.php?id=237269>



Ondskapens Sanne Ansikt (2010)  
11 Tracks (CD – Self-released) - \_ - \_ (43:14)

You are not sure about how this album sounds? Well, visit the band's MySpace site, then, and take a look for yourself:

*This time around we have incorporated more 80's influences, [...]*

Source:

<http://blogs.myspace.com/index.cfm?fuseaction=blog.view&friendId=453343219&blogId=531682788>

Call it a hint if you like and in case someone is familiar with their first output, the direction and style might be even clearer. Those distorted vocals are a relic of the early days and they were changed to something more appealing: black metal screams, raw and unpolished... in all their beautiful nastiness. And no ... this time, there is no weird introduction. Ildregn over jorden, the opener of this album, comes merely with some industrial sounds, which are later accompanied by some short keyboard fragments. And even though there is an instrumental interlude, it is an exception and nothing else.

Yes, Strah deliver ... they deliver like there would be no tomorrow. Darkthrone, Gorgoroth, Carpathian Forest (in their vilest moments) and other (rather raw) black metal bands could be used as a reference for the type of music on Ondskapens Sanne Ansikt. Sadly, there is not much of Craft's early works on this demo, but this may be rather wishful thinking from my side, because of my fascination for some of their art. There is a reason for citing the Swedish band: their albums have an enormous amount of drive and catchiness at times, something that gives this band a clear identity and makes them stand aside from the majority of other bands. They are able to create black metal with nothing but the basic elements of this genre but it is the quality in the song-writing that is worth to be emphasized. Fullmånens Ve & Gru had some hints on it and such can also be found on the latest one, but slightly more of it would have an even larger positive effect on the performance.

Strah are not a one-man band and you can hear the effect: the drums do not torment the listener with monotonous passages, like it is often the case when a machine has to fill up the ranks; several guitar layers were neatly woven together and the tracks have arrangements that are not only really good to listen to but do not have endless monotonous passages. These are already a lot of positive aspects and when you add that the music differs quite a lot over the course of the recording, then it is possible to imagine the quality of this recording. Jeg skal ødelegge for instance has a quite distinct riff structure but just before the repetition becomes an endurance Strah added some nice interludes and this impression was disrupted. Only the abrupt ending could be criticized here. Other tracks have different approaches, but it is hard to be overtly bored or annoyed by any of these. This album is really good and especially the production needs to be emphasized; even though the sound of music varies over the album.

To sum the impressions up a bit:

The first of the two demos offers black metal of a such a kind as to be unable to thoroughly fascinate, while the second one, despite a lack of overtly fresh ideas again, would have the quality to grab the attention of the listener and to create quite an interesting listening experience. Strah refuse to play too modern music and even though the 'pure formula' is not applied, there is at least an attempt to reawake some of the spirit of the early days of the Norwegian black metal scene again. It should not surprise, then, that the so-called target audience is rather the purist faction and not the mainstream one.

Acryptylyse – Oktober Myst

(USA; Black Metal, Noise, Ambient)

9 Tracks (CD/MP3 – Self-released) -\_-\_- (54:32)

<http://www.myspace.com/acryptylyseband>

Especially reviewers might get the impression of the black metal scene to be nothing more than a conservative genre, whose core essences or elements are repeated again and again with minor variations on new albums. And even though this impression bears some truth in it, to give such a broad statement would nevertheless not only be misleading but actually false. Out of the mist of mediocrity and plainness rise bands whose concept would differ to a surprisingly large degree and style from what the common idea behind the genre is. The American band Acryptylyse might be described as one of those outré projects... and their Oktober Myst release has a touch that is so rarely discovered on new releases.

There is this touch of Solefald (arrangements and atmosphere), of the avant-garde outputs by Morgul (flow of music as well as motives), of The Second Moon's debut album (atmosphere) and similar artists. Yet these bands are merely something like inspirational sources. Acryptylyse's music is quite heavy and guitar-oriented, an aspect that separates them from these aforementioned bands, whose art point/ed in a slightly different direction. The arrangements and also the basic ideas behind the avant-garde facets show some amount of similarity, but the emphasis on Oktober Myst is black metal and the American band leaves no doubt about this.

So, when you listen to this release, then you will experience some kind of weird experience at times, as you are bombarded with strange motives, guitar leads and the kind. Keyboards are restricted to the background and are not allowed to play a too dominant role; even though their play can be recognized clearly amongst the other instruments. It is just a different focus and a different type of music compared to those earlier mentioned bands. Nevertheless, these symphonic elements have an impact and help to divert the attention of the listener in some respect. The guitar make the pace in the front, while in the background the keys create a nice and calm counter-point. This is especially important every time the music takes one of these strange – but so interesting or 'fascinating' – turns in the progression of the art. One aspect is important to emphasize: the music might look normal now and then, but it is actually anything like it. The most 'normal' facet of them all might be the vocals: some slight reverb and a mixture screams, croaking and distorted/fast speaking.

So, from a broader perspective the art of Acryptylyse might be described as something to fill the gap between the avant-garde and the black metal scene. It is not entirely possible to give a statement that would sort the band into either categories. Controlled weirdness performed by skilled musicians – nice solos, really – with some references to the bands mentioned earlier.

Yet, this band is darker, more sinister and rather for something for fans of black metal with some amount of fascination for avant-garde. Well, at least from my point of view some additional amount of insanity would be a very welcome facet.





## Nattsvargr

Nattsvargr is a black metal band from the United States of America and has been active since 2005. It was formed after a name change of the old project Nocturnal Abyss, whose first release dates back to 1999. So, Noctir, he would be the main person behind both groups, has gained some experience already. Over the years both projects have been constantly active and in terms of the currently active one, released nearly one output per year so far. The following section covers older as well as the latest output of Nattsvargr.

<http://myspace.com/nattsblod>

<http://nocturnal-abyss-records.tripod.com/index.html>

### Morbid Night of Melancholy (2007)

(USA; Black Metal)

3 Tracks (CD/Tape – Nocturnal Abyss Records) - \_ \_ \_ (19:09)

Hello bass-drums, are you there? Oh well ... Morbid Night of Melancholy comes with one of those strange programming of the drum-computer. Here, you can hear something of the snare and the cymbals, while the bass is pretty much somewhere far in the back, unable to get through the sound created by the rest of the instruments; especially when the tempo heads for higher regions. So, there is at times a strange combination of instruments whose basis is not really there.

Anyway, when you leave this aspect aside and look behind it, then you might be able to enjoy some well crafted raw black metal art. The opener is heavily influenced by Darkthrone's Transylvanian Hunger and comes not only with an icy sound but also with a rather high speed. Something similar can hardly be said of the other two tracks, whose style switches considerably and provide the listener therefore with a different set of dark and haunting atmospheres; a more depressing one in The Light of Funeral Torches and a slightly more aggressive one in Morbid Night of Melancholy.

The title says it all: Morbid Night of Melancholy. This is what you get here and nothing else. Black metal of a basic kind, executed on a good level, with a good atmosphere and a raw/unpolished production. Fans of the underground scene should give this release a try.



### Fimbulvetr (2008)

(USA; Black Metal)

4 Tracks (Tape – Nocturnal Abyss Records) - \_ \_ \_ (11:52)

Fimbulvetr continues where the preceding demo Morbid Night of Melancholy basically left off. Slow/midtempo black metal with a good amount of rawness and a pretty basic setup. The music is again quite dark and also depressive in some respect, but do keep in mind that this band has nothing to do with this particular subgenre, which has become prominent for releasing crappy music on a large scale.

Two compositions plus an intro and an outro appear on this release and the music follows the basic pattern of the underground scene black metal. There is this attitude of giving a shit about any form of trend or modern influences. Wanna have a bass-guitar? Well, then look for a different place, but most certainly not here. Fimbulvetr is guitar driven music and this term should be understood in its true form. Yes, there is a drum-computer in the background and, yes, there are vocals, but when you listen to this demo, then you rather get the impression that these facets are nothing more than 'need to have' or 'nice to have'. The largest impact comes from the guitars and there is little doubt about it. Those slow and heavy riffs in 'Into the Realms of Chaos' dominate everything else and add a quite dark touch to the concept of the band; which is able to compensate for the lack of depth in some respect.

Well, this type of music is of a kind not many will perceive as fascinating and interesting. The reasons for this lie in the effects which stem from the production, whose balancing of the instruments is anything but optimal. Nevertheless, the riffs or better said the tracks have some sort of fascination, so underground maniacs should give this release a try.

Vinterblod (2010)  
(USA; Black Metal)  
7 Tracks (CD – Nocturnal Abyss Records) -\_-\_-  
(34:28)

The latest release of the band would be Vinterblod and one of the differences with the earlier ones would be the replacement of Mr. Drum-computer with some of more flesh and blood; at least according to the additional notes at the Metal Archives (all reviews were written on MP3s [320 kbps]). So, there should be some different atmosphere and style in the music, as this instrument received a more independent role; at least theoretically.

Being their second full-length album some amount of professionalism should be expected and compared with the two demos, which received a review in this issue, Vinterblod offers a more consistent and better performance. Yet what was written on the Fimbulvetr one is also true on this one; in limits this is. The main focus are again the guitars and the term 'main' should really be emphasized. What has chained is the impact of the drums and it is nice to have this vague double-bass texture in the background; well, aside from some minimalist sound of the cymbals this instrument can hardly be recognized at times. It is underground black metal after all and this band seems to unwilling to move outside this distinct category.

What has changed, aside from a change in the line-up, is the actual sound and style of the band; at least from my narrow perspective on the topic. The music on this albums comes with less of this slow and depressive kind of black metal and with something more straightforward. Faster and with a rather linear structure in terms of the song-writing, this is what can be found on Vinterblod and takes the listener back to the earlier days of the black metal scene. Not much of a compromise was made and even though repetition and monotony play a role here, it is still possible to enjoy the compositions. Nothing new, nothing fresh, but something executed with quite some sense of this type of music; even though the production ruins it a bit. So, if you are looking for stuff whose style is anything but normal, why don't you give this one a try.



Zarach 'Baal' Tharagh – In Articulo Mortis  
(France; Raw Black Metal, Noise)  
2 Tracks (MP3 – Self-released) -\_-\_-  
(6:18)  
<http://www.myspace.com/zarachbaaltharagh>

No ... nothing different. No, really ... you can believe me on this, there is not really something new on this demo here ... really. It has been the way that it used to be: black metal of the kind only few bands will dare to play purposively over a longer period of time: fast, primitive, noisy and quite unbalanced. This French band has always created art of this extreme kind and keeps delivering the demos on a somehow regular basis; yet there seems to be some sort of a decline in number in recent months; at least to my knowledge.



In case someone has ever had a chance to listen to any of the quite numerous releases of ZBT, then this person might already be familiar with the music on this one. There is not much of a difference and Luc Mertz sticks to this underground style of black metal, whose likeliness to see a commercial breakthrough is next to minus zero. Fast and noisy stuff without much of a compromise – even though you might expect such at the opening of the title track – is what these tracks are all about. Distorted vocals, the all too common drum-computer in the background and these dominant guitar with their distinct sound ... these are the basic elements of all releases and the level in which these appear as well as the degree in which it is possible to refer to the demos/albums are listenable, is the basic difference between them.



To be frank:

When you listen to this type of art for the first time, then you might wonder whether this would be some sort of hoax or bad joke. The music is such far off the spectrum that it is difficult to actually put it into the normal framework or setting of the black metal scene; which has some prominence for bands whose art (music, eccentricity, lyrics, etc.) is anything but normal. Yet, ZBT falls through the cracks. Unlike the masses of black metal wannabes, it is impossible to put this band into the same category.

To quote the band:

NO PROFESSIONALISM ... NO COMMERCIALISM ... NO TRENDS ... HOME RECORDING AND TRUE UNDERGROUND SINCE 1983. BLACK SHEEP FOREVER

(taken from: <http://www.myspace.com/zarachbaaltharagh>)

It seems like Luc Mertz simply gives a fuck and this makes this band somehow special... even though it is difficult to listen to his art at times.

### Armageddon – The Persecution From Heaven

(Greece; Black Metal)

2 Tracks (CD – Self-released) -\_- (7:00)

<http://www.myspace.com/armageddongr>

When you release a music magazine, then you need to get music in one way or another: buy, it download it (legal, illegal) or you ask bands, whether they are able to provide you with their music. The more time constraints you have, the more there is (might?) be a tendency to shift the focus on the third of these aspects. Even though there are more music sites in the Internet than ever before, it is really hard to listen to each of the albums before you decide whether they are worth to be included in the magazine; especially when there is not much time at hand. Armageddon is such an example ...

... and believe me, their music is no rotten apple (tomato?). The lack of originality – you cannot miss the obvious



references here – are only natural for a young band on their first demo output. Yes, it is Cradle of Filth, but unlike the Brits these Greeks play their music with more punch and less cheesy keyboards. Here the emphasis lies on the black metal and not on Gothic or similar stuff. On those two tracks the guitars play some nice riffs and were also granted some space to perform solos (the second comes with a post-rock reference), while in the background a bass-guitar creates the proper basis for this type of art. A drum-computer? No ... they have someone with more flesh and blood and therefore with a less monotonous performance. Yes, to hear a band actually play the music and not relying on some obscure PC-program is always something that should be

preferred. How this all turns out would be this: generally midtempo played music with some Dani-inspired vocals (just the screeches and less extreme) and a black metal performance whose style wakes memories on the earlier Dimmu Borgir releases and similar bands from this era. Good to listen to would there not be those two aspects Amargeddon should work on:

- Too many vocals
- Too short tracks

Once they get this stuff right and you have a fancy for this type of black metal (slightly symphonic) then you might want to keep an eye on them. Nevertheless, for a new band: not bad .. really not bad.

Note:

The CD comes printed and has also a printed coloured booklet with lyrics and fancy pictures.





## Edgar Allen Poe – The City in the Sea

Lo! Death has reared himself a throne  
In a strange city lying alone  
Far down within the dim West,  
Where the good and the bad and the worst and the best  
Have gone to their eternal rest.  
There shrines and palaces and towers  
(Time-eaten towers and tremble not!)  
Resemble nothing that is ours.  
Around, by lifting winds forgot,  
Resignedly beneath the sky  
The melancholy waters lie.

No rays from the holy Heaven come down  
On the long night-time of that town;  
But light from out the lurid sea  
Streams up the turrets silently—  
Gleams up the pinnacles far and free—  
Up domes—up spires—up kingly halls—  
Up fanes—up Babylon-like walls—  
Up shadowy long-forgotten bowers  
Of sculptured ivy and stone flowers—  
Up many and many a marvellous shrine  
Whose wreathed friezes intertwine  
The viol, the violet, and the vine.  
Resignedly beneath the sky  
The melancholy waters lie.  
So blend the turrets and shadows there  
That all seem pendulous in air,  
While from a proud tower in the town  
Death looks gigantically down.

There open fanes and gaping graves  
Yawn level with the luminous waves;  
But not the riches there that lie  
In each idol's diamond eye—  
Not the gaily-jewelled dead  
Tempt the waters from their bed;  
For no ripples curl, alas!  
Along that wilderness of glass—  
No swellings tell that winds may be  
Upon some far-off happier sea—  
No heavings hint that winds have been  
On seas less hideously serene.

But lo, a stir is in the air!  
The wave—there is a movement there!  
As if the towers had thrust aside,  
In slightly sinking, the dull tide—  
As if their tops had feebly given  
A void within the filmy Heaven.  
The waves have now a redder glow—  
The hours are breathing faint and low—  
And when, amid no earthly moans,  
Down, down that town shall settle hence,  
Hell, rising from a thousand thrones,  
Shall do it reverence.

## **Index poetry:**

<http://www.gutenberg.org/etext/10031>

## **Index pictures:**

[https://secure.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/de/w/index.php?title=Datei:Der\\_Daemon\\_Baphomet.PNG&filetimestamp=20090214063218](https://secure.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/de/w/index.php?title=Datei:Der_Daemon_Baphomet.PNG&filetimestamp=20090214063218)

<http://www.archive.org/details/lefantastiqueauc00lacl>

<http://www.archive.org/details/cinemacraftsmans00pattuoft>

<http://www.archive.org/details/presentdaybulgar00rachuoft>

[http://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/e/e6/Pentagram\\_with\\_one\\_point\\_down\\_%28de\\_Guaita%29.jpg](http://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/e/e6/Pentagram_with_one_point_down_%28de_Guaita%29.jpg)

<http://www.archive.org/details/dec1917war00londuoft>

<http://www.archive.org/details/war1918apr00londuoft>

<http://www.archive.org/details/war1918jan00londuoft>

<http://www.archive.org/details/war1918mar00londuoft>

<http://www.archive.org/details/war1918may00londuoft>

## ***Outlook:***

Hopefully someday there will be an essay

More reviews on non-metal stuff

More interviews

And those old old pictures.

Greater variety on poetry (recommendations are welcome)

